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THE VOGUE OF LITERARY THEORIES IN GERMANY FROM 1500 TO 1730

> Verschweig' auch nichts, mein immer muntrer Sohn,
> von unsrer Organisation,
> Auch dasz wir uns an Zeit und Ort nichts kehren
> Und uns um Aristoteles nicht scheren.
> —G. HAUPTMANN, *Festspiel in deutschen Reimen.*

"Wie leid ists mir itzt, dasz ich nicht mehr Poeten und Historien gelesen habe und mir auch dieselben niemand geleret hat. Habe dafür müssen lesen des Teufels Dreck, die Philosophos und Sophisten. . . . ." Thus Martin Luther (1524). He must have been thinking here, among others, of Aristotle. The Stagyrite had been in the mediaeval mind the *princeps philosophorum*,[1] the high-priest of knowledge, and last, not least, the mentor and teacher of the mighty Alexander. To be sure, he was sometimes represented as a necromancer, but this also happened to the much-revered Virgil and, in a way, it was a compliment. The "Pfaffe" Lamprecht (about 1125: "Aristoteles der Wise man") and Rudolf von Ems[2] sang his praises and his fame would have been untarnished but for his name's getting connected with a certain, probably oriental, tale of a wise man's futile attempt to outwit a clever woman. The result was a striking impression in the mediaeval mind: the wiseacre on all fours, bridled and bestraddled by Alexander's beautiful wife; a picture redrawn in tales, Latin and other, and shown in Shrovetide plays.[3] It is well known that Luther put Cicero far above the *Erzstultum* Aristoteles, the "mueszigen Esel der Geld und Gut, und gute faule Tage genug

[1] Liber de moribus et vita philosophorum, fifteenth-century MS. Berlin, Kön. Bibl. 924 theol. qu. 214. In 1516 in "Ein schön Tragedj, gezogen aus der Heyl. Geschrifft, wie Belial ein recht mit Christo anfecht," we find among the 31 characters: God the Father, Solomon, Peter, Jeremy, Octavian, and Aristotle. Cf. Gottsched, *Nöthiger Vorrath*, II, 227).

[2] Alexanderlied: "Der kuenste bluome an wisheit/von dem alliu pfaffheit seit . . . . Aristoteles der wīse/der nach menschlichem prīse/der hohesten kuenste wīsete/die man zuo kuenste prīsete." Cf. W. Hertz, "Aristoteles in den Alexanderdichtungen des Mittelalters," *Abh. d. I. Cl. d. K. Ak. d. Wiss.*, Bd. XIX, I, Abt. (Munich, 1890).

[3] Cf. H. Sachs, *Persones, die königin, reit den philosophum Aristotelem*, 1545. Keller gives full references. See also Cholevius, *Gesch. d. D. Poesie nach ihren antiken Elementen* (Leipzig 1854–56), I, 172.

hatte."[1] Yet Aristotle was an enemy to be counted with. Translated and interpreted by Theodore Gaza, George of Trebizond, Cardinal Bessarion, Gregorius Tiphernas, and others, he won staunch supporters, even among the Reformers. Melanchthon was one of them and it cost Amerbach his position. No greater monument could have been raised to him at the time than the five volumes of the Aldina Major (1495–98), no more untiring devotion lavished on his text than that of Victorius, Muretus, Camerarius.[2] Luther's language was correspondingly violent against the "verdammte hochmuetige schalkhaftige Heide." It is true that he excepted the *Poetics* from his sweeping condemnation, but the exception could not destroy the general impression. The *Poetics* lived through the Middle Ages in sorely mutilated and misinterpreted Syriac and Arabic versions and subsequently in Herman's translation of the shortened paraphrase by Averroes. Later on, however, in the first half of the sixteenth century, translations and commentaries became frequent.[3] Aristotle began, at that time, to assume the position of supreme legislator of Parnassus, which he did not yet occupy in the early Renaissance, but to which the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after Scaliger, raised him with an eagerness nothing short of astounding, and which nothing but a passionate craving for authority, utterly foreign to our times, can explain.[4] Among other possible legislators of poetry Longinus was hardly known,[5] but the influence of Horace, although little in the foreground, was continuous and strong. Especially in the drama, the precepts of Evanthius-Donatus and Suetonius-Diomedes found the readiest acceptance. Cicero and Quintilian were abundantly quoted.

The question now is asked: What was the attitude of the man of letters, especially the dramatist, toward poetical laws and rules

[1] Truth to say, "Aristoteles ist zwar ein guter und listiger dialecticus gewest, der den Methodum und richtigen ordentlichen Weg im Lehren gehalten hat; aber die Sachen und den rechten Kern hat er nicht gelehrt, wie Cicero."—*Werke*, Frankfurt-Erlangen, 62, 341.

[2] Cf. Pauly, *Real-Enc. d. class. Altertumswiss.*, II (1895), 1031.

[3] Cf. Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (New York, 1899), pp. 16 ff.; J. W. Cunliffe, "Early French Tragedy," *Journal of Comparative Literature*, I, 303.

[4] Cf. Spingarn, p. 141; Borinski, *Die Poetik der Renaissance* (1886), p. 81.

[5] One of the few who mention as much as his name is Zesen, *Das hochdeutsche Helikonische Rosentahl* (1669), pp. 22–23.

as, in the main, laid down by Aristotle and his more prominent successors? We do not wish here to expound the historical aspects of the *poeta nascitur* theory in Germany. Whether they believed that a poet must have inborn gifts, or held that training alone was sufficient; whatever position they took with regard to *Poetics* and *Aeraria*, sedatives for the wild Pegasus or tonics for the weary Muse, there was, apart from that, the crucial question: Shall we have binding rules or not, and, if so, how binding?

There is, of course, a background of submission; there is the dumb, colorless crowd of the subservients, who follow the rules because somebody made them, theirs not to question but obey. In the sixteenth century their name is legion. Michael Hiltprandus prints with his double drama *Ecclesia Militans* (Dilingae, 1573) three testimonials: the first from a professor of theology, vouching for the Catholic orthodoxy of the play; the second from Johannes Vicaeus, professor of philosophy at Oxford, assuring that "nothing was found in it which might seem to deviate from the rules and precepts of the poetics" (". . . . Nihil in ea reperi, quod ab artis poeticae rationibus ac praeceptionibus alienum videatur"); the third signed by M. Joh. Engerdus, *Professor Poeseos* at Ingolstadt, who found that the *pedes et syllabae* were made *ad unguem*. This was certainly love of authority with a vengeance. Balthasar Crusius[1] Franciscus, Eutrachelius,[2] and Aegidius Hunnius anxiously follow the rules, and so do many others. "And to what purpose?" one might ask, when, in spite of the well-meant efforts of scores of rule-abiding schoolmasters all over Europe, Ascham, scanning England, France, Italy, and Germany for a perfect tragedy, could find "not one, I am sure is able to abide the trew touch of *Aristotles* preceptes, and *Euripides* examples, save onely two, that I ever saw, *M. Watsons Absalom*, and *Georgius Buckananus Iephthe*."[3] The harshness of this verdict was, maybe, likely to dishearten a dramatist, but it would gladden the heart of the critics.

The next century saw the advent of Opitz. He had studied the rules as they were taught by Aristotle and Horace in the past and

[1] *Exodus Tragoedia*, 1605.

[2] *Esther* (1549); cf. Schwartz, *Esther im deutschen und niederländischen Drama* (Oldenburg, 1896), pp. 201 ff.

[3] *The Scholemaster* (*ca.* 1570), *ap.* Cunliffe, *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford 1912), p. lxxix.

more recently by Vida and Scaliger, "so auszfuehrlich dasz weiter etwas darbey zu thun vergebens ist."[1] But there can never be too much of a good thing, apparently, and Opitz wrote, or rather pieced together, a little treatise of his own, at which the mantle of the wizard fell on his rather narrow shoulders, and he was the lawgiver for a long time. It might be interesting to follow his fortune. Its curve, in a way, measures the popularity of the rules in Germany, and to trace it is like taking a flying trip through the literary thought of a century.

THE RISE AND FALL OF MARTIN OPITZ

Saluted by Tscherning as the Homer and Maro of his time; celebrated by Fleming, who was then writing his sonnets in the wilds of Tartary, as the prince of German song, and by Dach, as the marvel of the country; toasted in 1627, at a banquet in Strassburg, as the greatest of German poets, he finally reached the zenith of his glory when Buchner, the Wittenberg *Professor Poeseos*, addressed him as follows: "Our country's muse cannot rise any higher and must rest on the summit where you have placed her. Meanwhile we shall follow you and adore your footsteps, thus, however, making sure that we shall not die in complete obscurity" ("Non potest ascendere altius Musa patria et necesse est ut quiescat eo fastigio quo tu collocasti. Interim te sequemur et tua vestigia adorabimus, sic tamen non obscuri prorsus morituri").[2]

Moller puts him in the first rank of the German poets[3] and his merits as a reformer are upheld in academic dissertations.[4] Neither are his claims overlooked in foreign parts.[5]

[1] *Buch der Teutschen Poeterey*, ed. Braune, p. 8.

[2] *Epist.*, 51; cf. Morhof, *Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache und Poesie*, ed. 1700, p. 387. Whoever cares to read more of such nauseous adulation is referred to the pages of adjectives and verses devoted to Opitz and stored in Bergmann's *Aerarium Poeticum* (1677), pp. 1296 ff. See also Reimmann, *Versuch einer Einleitung in die Historiam Literariam* (1708–13), III, 450 ff.

[3] *Tyrocinium* (1656).

[4] Joh. Schreinerus defended the following thesis in his dissertation on *Problemata Poetica* (1674): "Multum alienus est a pristina facie modernus Germanae Poeseos nitor, cujus reformationis autor Opitius erat, nec infelices successores Flemingius, Schottelius, Ristius pluresve alii."

[5] Baillet declares: "On dit que c'est lui qui a débrouillé cette Poësie, qui lui a donné ses règles, sa mesure, sés accroissemens, qui l'a rendu fixe et qui l'a mise en l'état, où nous la voyons aujourd'hui."—*Jugemens des Savans* (Paris, 1668), IV, 108 ff.

This was a meteoric start to which a sudden end might have been predicted. It may be that, after such extravagant praise as Buchner's, a reaction was bound to come.

In 1637, while Rist was still appreciative of Opitz,[1] there were persons about who took a strangely sober view of his achievements. There was Harsdörfer denying him originality,[2] and Hoffmann von Hoffmannswaldau, who came very near modern valuations of the idol, but whose opinions would have sounded nothing less than sacrilegious to the Opitz devotee of thirty years before.[3]

Poor Opitz! In 1683 the Frankfort professor Adam Ebertus,[4] after the model of Boccalini's famous *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, with Erasmian picturesqueness and in racy Latin, described the shameful treatment meted out to Opitz on the mountain of song,[5] and a few years later Weise was speaking of "dear Mr. Opitz" in a condescending way and with many French words. On the whole, excepting the two years at the end of his life as Historiographer Royal of Poland, Opitz had been a poor wretch, a wanderer on the face of the earth,

[1] ". . . . Der seinen fruchtbaren Tau der gruendlichen Poetischen Unterweisung erstlich ueber seine Landeszleute die Teutsche/mildiglich hat auszgegossen . . . ." (*Poetischer Lustgarten*). At his death he praised Opitz and thereby incurred, as he believed, the lifelong persecution of the mysterious "Simei." Cf. *Das friedewünschende Teutschland* (1647).

[2] Starting from the principle that originality makes the poet, he concluded that Joost van den Vondel, the contemporary Dutch poet, was not wrong in denying Opitz the title of poet: "weil er gar wenig aus eigener Erfindung/viel aber aus andern gedolmetschet habe" (*Gespraechspiele*, IV [1647], 62 of the Zugabe). Cf. also *Hertzbewegliche Sonntagsandachten* (Nürnberg, 1649, 1650), and the author's "De Nederlandsche letterkunde in Duitschland in de zeventiende eeuw," *Tydschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal-en Letterkunde* (Leiden), XXXIII, 25 ff.

[3] Hoffmannswaldau chiefly emphasizes Opitz' merits in point of poetical reform (*Deutsche Übersetzungen und Gedichte* [Breslau, 1679]).

[4] *Quinquaginta Relationes ex Parnasso* (Hamburg, 1683). Boccalini's influence (1556–1613) on Joh. Val. Andreae, Harsdörfer, and especially Schupp in his later years, is noticeable. Partial translations into German were published in 1617 and 1641. An almost complete edition, reprinted in 1644, appeared in Frankfort in 1644. Cf. P. Stötzner, "Trajano Boccalini und sein Einfluss auf die deutsche Litteratur," *Archiv* (1899), CIII, 107–47.

[5] Opitz, exhausted by the excesses of a lewd life ("popinas lenonesque nimium sectandi"), clad in rags, has fallen asleep on a heap of manure within the precincts of Parnassus. He is caught and put to rope-twisting, escapes, but is caught again and brought before Apollo. Conrad Celtes, good soul, offers him part of his clothes, but Opitz declines, hoping that his rags will soften the judge's heart. And now the Humanist repays Opitz with interest for whatever the latter, and more especially his followers, in their nationalistic zeal for the language of the people, may have said against the Latin-writing pundits. After a sharp reprimand the cringing wretch is bound over to behave decently and dismissed (Relatio XXV).

mostly dependent upon patrons; and Weise, who was something of a "climber," has his mouth full with the names of more substantial people: Schottelius, who is "Hoff-Rath" in Wolfenbüttel, Harsdörfer, "ein vornehmer Patritius und Raths-Verwandter" in Nürnberg, or Hoffmannswaldau, who was "Praeses" in Breslau.[1]

No wonder, then, that from Morhof to Statius, through Jaenich and Wahl,[2] and in spite of an occasional word in his favor,[3] the attitude toward Opitz became increasingly critical or indifferent. It was high time when Gottsched came to the rescue and in a public lecture, in 1739, paid solemn homage to the mighty one who had fallen so low.[4] In 1747 Opitz is already treated as an object of literary research,[5] an indication that he was no longer regarded as a living force in literature, and that Gottsched's "Lobrede," in spite of the high tribute paid, was a dirge.

But to revert to the first half of the seventeenth century: After Opitz the followers of the rules were no less numerous. Klaj was proud to be one of them[6] and Mitternacht marveled at the success

[1] *Curiöse Gedanken*, andrer Theil, 1692.

[2] Morhof also quotes Buchner, while disagreeing with him, repeats the charge made by Harsdörfer, and even dares to say that Opitz was not the first to reassert the rule of natural accentuation of verses, but Petrus Denaisius, on the testimony of Melchior Adami (Morhof, *Unterricht*, ed. 1700, p. 387). Of course, we know that Johannes Claj (of Herzberg) in his German grammar of 1578 enunciated the principle before Opitz, and that the Dutchman Abraham Van der Myle expressed it in 1612, in his *Orthographia Belgica*. Opitz himself quotes the example of Tobias Hübner. Jaenich sticks to Opitz, but Wahl is skeptical about reformers. He does not indorse Buchner as to Opitz and declares: "Von denen allzustrengen Reformatoribus der Teutschen Sprache will ich jetzo nichts gedencken, weil schon jedermann bekannt dasz sie nicht so viel Fruechte gebracht als sie wohl gemeynet" (*Anleitung zur poetischen Elocution*, 1706). This passage does not occur in the edition of 1709 (Wahl, *Kurtze Einleitung* [1715]). With indifference more wounding than any scorn, such a creature as J. J. Statius declares in 1715: "Dieser Mann hat zu seiner Zeit einen ziemlichen Beyfall gehabt" (*Der wohlgebahnte Weg zu der deutschen Poesie* [1716]).

[3] An anonymous author—Benjamin Neukirch—in 1697 believes that Buchner's praise, of course, was exaggerated, but that nevertheless Opitz did ". . . . mehr als man meynet, und dasz viel Versmacher in Deutschland leben, welche die Kraefft te dieses Poeten noch nicht erkennet" (Vorrede von der Poesie, in *Herrn von Hoffmannswaldau und andere Gedichte*, [Leipzig, 1697–1709]).

[4] This "Lobrede auf Opitz" reprinted in *Gesammelte Reden*, and which is said to contain a number of opinions of contemporaries down to Leibniz, was not accessible to me.

[5] Cf. Gottsched, *Beytraege* (Leipzig, 1732–1742), VII, 54, 74, etc.).

[6] *Herodes der Kindermörder*, 1645. But Elias Schlegel, as Schmid (*Chronologie des deutschen Theaters*, 1775) points out, showed how little the rules were really respected in this drama. Cf. also *Critische Beytraege*, VII, 355.

of the rule-scorning English comedians,[1] while Morhof,[2] Rappolt,[3] Triller[4] still unquestioningly cling to tradition and authority.

Certain authors, from the sixteenth century on, while standing for the rules, would feel urged to know and say why. Schosser, for instance, contended that they were after all only reasonable, those "boundaries which reason determines and which the leader of the Peripatetics has shown us" ("Terminos quos ratio fixit et princeps Peripateticorum monstravit . . . .").[5] The Jesuit Alexander Pontanus professes to believe in the rules, but in his opinion Aristotle and his followers have failed to point out a really easy way to Helicon, failed to write a treatise which the teachers would find easy to explain and the students easy to understand. Hence his own book.[6]

Rist, like Morhof, has heard of heretics who question all authority.[7] However, there must be rules, he thinks, and besides they have been drawn by Opitz "aus der Sprachen Natur."[8] At this

[1] They do not seem to owe their success to the rules: "Zwar die Engellender/und andere im Lande herumbstreichende *Comoedianten*/als welche entweder agar nichts oder nicht viel besonders studiret haben/sind hierum wenig bekuemmert/wie aus denen Engellaendischen Comoedien/so in zweyen *voluminibus* zusammen gedruckt/satsam zu ersehen stehet/als in welchen fast nicht eine einige zu befinden/die nach den vorgeschriebnen *legibus* und *praeceptis* durchgaengig eingerichtet wäre, ..."—*Der ungluecksselige Soldat und vorwitzige Barbierer*, 1662.

[2] *Unterricht*, ed. 1700, 190 ff.

[3] Professor D. Rappolt, of Leipzig, was a full-fledged critic. He wrote a commentary to the *Christus Patiens* of Hugo Grotius, which was supposed to be a well-nigh perfect tragedy, and tested it with all the known critical acids "nach den scharffen Reguln des Aristotelis, Horatii, Heinsii und Scaligeri." It was edited by his no less learned son-in-law, L. Feller, Leipzig, 1678.

[4] In 1723 Dan. W. Triller wrote a commentary to the *Christus Patiens*, this time in German, calling the work of the Dutch jurist a *Wunderwerck*, in which none of the rules of "Aristotile, Barnes [*sic*], Dryden, Sarrazin, Corneille" had been violated.

[5] *Disputatio de Tragoedia* (1569).

[6] He scoffs at the notion that poets are born and can really be poets without any training, as if, he says, "poets grew from seed, spontaneously, like mushrooms in the woods and did not need any rules." An orator, they think, needs training ("At poema iubentur & putantur posse fingere, qui eius artem nullam gustaverunt: qui neque de eius fine, partibus, & partis cuiusque proprietatibus per nebulam aliquando audierunt"). But the rules, even as they are, might be better. Aristotle is obscure, the text mutilated and imperfect, and he speaks only of tragedy. Horace never intended his epistle to the Piso's as a treatise on poetics and as for Scaliger, Vida, and others, they are copious, subtle, incisive, but—unsatisfactory! (*Institutiones Poeticae* [1594].)

[7] ". . . . Die doerffen wohl fragen/wer dem Opitio befohlen habe/gewisse leges von der Teutschen Poeterey auffzusetzen/es moechte wohl ein jedweder seine eigene Prosodey schreiben."

[8] *Musa Teutonica*, 1643. This point of view is emphasized in 1725: "Diese Regeln sind nichts anders als die Ordnung, welche die Natur erfordert und alle gute Poeten

point the argument of common-sense was the only one that would still hold out. There were too many writers in revolt, Germans and foreigners, some even putting forth in treatises their bold negations.[1] Finally the rules appeared to be supreme again, at least for a short time. The heretics were chastised and Weise was most cruelly spoken of by Gottsched.[2] But, almost unnoticeably, a great change had come to pass. It was understood, in theory at least, that there was to be no more unreasoned tyranny of the rules. There is no slavery in obeying the laws of nature and the dictates of common-sense. And that was just what the rules were at last taken to represent. Witness Gottsched: "Es kommt also nicht auf das Ansehen Aristotelis, oder andrer Critikverstandigen an; die solche Regeln nach ihrem Eigensinne ausgedacht haetten. Die gesunde Vernunft hat solches die Griechischen Tragoedienschreiber gelehrte, ehe diser Weltweise die Regeln der Dichtkunst abfassete."[3]

The traditionalists had thus been slowly compelled, first, to account reasonably for their attitude and thereby make it clearer, not only to others, but perhaps also to themselves, and, concomitantly, to abate their claims and learn a certain tolerance. Of course, there was an underlying reason. Considering the strength which the legions of authority usually possess by numbers and inertia, the force and aggressiveness of the opposition must have been great; and indeed it was little short of astounding. To be sure, no German before Gottsched ever came near Shakespeare's imperial self-reliance, claiming as his privilege:

> to o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour
> To plant and o'erwhelm custom.[4]

gehalten haben. Der fuernehmste, welcher uns hierinnen den Weg gebahnt, ist bey den Griechen Aristoteles, und bey den Lateinern Horatius gewesen. Diesen sind zu unseren Zeiten Vida, Scaliger, Vossius, Rapinus and andere gefolgt, welche alle doch nicht so weit gesehen als der erste."—*Anleitung zur Poesie*, Anon. (Breslau, 1725).

[1] Picander-Henrici, for instance, although respectful of the rules in general, has "for nuetzlich befunden, die Regeln der Kunst nicht so genau, als wohl billig, in acht zu nehmen. Diese Entschuldigung wird um so geneigter angenommen werden weil sich der fruchtbare Comoedien-Schreiber in Spanien, *Lope de Vega* damit fortzukommen getrauet/und solches in einem Gedicht: *Arte nuevo de hazer comedias in este tiempo*, welches er der Academie zu Madrit zugeschrieben, angefuehret."—*Teutsche Schauspiele* (1726).

[2] *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen*, 1730, pp. 593–94.

[3] *Beytrage*, III, 616.

[4] *Winter's Tale*, Prol. IV.

But strange to say, the Humanists (whose dramatic history is not known as it should be) came very near it.

Gnapheus chose the theme of the prodigal son for one of his comedies, a theme which skirts tragedy at points. He knows it is "against the rules of comedy which Flaccus handed down to us." Nevertheless he wrote his play. "For I prefer," he said, "to observe the respect due to piety rather than the decorum of literature" ("Malui enim pietatis respectui quam literaturae decoro alicubi servire . . . . crimen levius quam a sensu et rei dignitate recedere."[1] To him the subject was the main matter, not the form into which it was to be put. To violate the rules of Horace was to him a "lighter offense than to deviate from the dignity of the subject." Why should the rules laid down by a heathen philosopher, "Aristoteles der Haid," bind a Christian dramatist?[2] The heathen tolerance and promiscuity of the Renaissance is a thing of the past, said Nicolaus Barptolomaeus.[3] This is a new age and a new race. Therefore, says Johannes Sapidus, who knew the critics down to Alexander Donatus:

. . . . we cannot follow, neither do we want to/the art and custom of Antiquity./For in our time, in contrast to that bygone age,/Things have a different aspect, arrangement and foundation;/The way of living has changed, the worship of God has changed,/The mutual intercourse of men has changed,/Not only in public but in private life;/Hence also a changed way of writing is necessary.

. . . . at nos nec potuimus nec uoluimus sequi
Artem atque morem, quem tenuit antiquitas.
Nam aetate nostra, prisco ab isto tempore,
Rerum alia facies, ordo & institutio,
Alius modus uitae, alius est cultus Dei,
Alia hominum communicatio inuicem,
Non publice solum, sed et domestice:
Unde & alia ratione scribendi est opus.[4]

To Naogeorg the critics objected that his tragedies were no tragedies. To be sure, he replied, "I know what they do not like in

[1] *Acolastus* (1529), ed. Bolte.

[2] As he is called in the title of a play of 1511 (Goedeke, *Grundriss*, I, 333).

[3] He has only four acts in his tragedy *Christus Xylonicus* (Colon., 1537; also in *Trag. & Com. aliquot* [Basil, 1541]). But this French monk impenitently declares that "Christian liberty refuses to be bound by those far-fetched heathen rules" ("Christianae libertatis rationem anxiis ethnicorum legibus astrictam esse noluit"!).

[4] Anabion, *Argentorati*, 1539.

them: the comical elements which I insert for relief. I do not delight in bombast or endless words; I do not confine my subjects to the Greeks, and you will rarely hear me exclaim 'Vae' or 'Iuppiter.' I leave that to Sophocles and to Euripides, and to Seneca. They were successful enough in their time, but the times have changed."[1] This was independence with just a dash of defiance, but it was not perjury to the masters of antiquity. They were expressions of their own time and as such to be honored, and it was no inconsistency of Naogeorg to translate into Latin the *Ajax* and the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. It was not scorn, only the logical adaptation to changed circumstances. "We have often offended against the rules of ancient Comedy, not in contempt, but as a matter of expediency," said one of the Humanists in 1590 ("In leges veteris Comoediae saepe peccabimus, non contemptu sed consilio").[2] Ludovicus Crocius wonders how anyone can bother to uphold the rules. "Who will fight for a thing which time has antiquated? Where is Athens? where is the Roman Forum? where are the Megalensic games? where are the circuses and the theaters?" If all these have perished, why do we still enforce rules which were observed by the poets at the time when these flourished?[3] Further instances of a fine spirit of independence might be shown in Gregorius Hollonius, of Liège,[4] Heinrich Cnaust of Berlin,[5] and Cornelius Schonaeus of Delft.[6] Thus we observe the Humanists, actuated by a strong sense of nationalism, which seems to have arisen in the Netherlands and in Germany as

[1] Further he remarks:

> At nunc si eorum quisquam agat tragoedias
> Populoque spectandas uel ipse Diphilus
> Exhibeat, explodetur, huius si modo
> Genius popelli notus est satis mihi.
> . . . . si auferas sententiarum lumina,
> Atque grauitatem dictionis propriam,
> Inisipidius nec esse insulsius,
> Nec tempori huic minus fatebere idoneum.
>
> [*Hamanus Tragoedia*, 1583.]

In the dedication of his *Iudas Iscariotes* (1552) he again upholds his claim of being the representative of a new kind of tragedy. His translator Dam. Lindtner (*Von der Königin Esther und Haman* [1607]) has assimilated his spirit.

[2] "De humanitatis regno comoedia altera, in qua de criticis, poetis obscoenis: et aliis ad literas spectantibus agitur," 1590, MS, Munich, Hof- und Staatsbibl. *ap.* Francke, *Terenz und die Schulkomoedie in Deutschland* (1877), p. 140.

[3] *Tragicae comicaeque actiones* (1605).

[4] *Lambertias* (Antverpiae, 1556).

Agapetus (Argent., 1562).

[6] *Triumphus Christi, Comoediarum altera pars* (Amsterdam, 1595).

early as, and maybe earlier than, in Italy,[1] and which perhaps has shown itself stronger in those countries than anywhere else,[2] contending, to be sure, for freedom from the ancient rules, but not from rules as such. The changing conditions of life should be expressed by changing laws, they held; but they would not have been Humanists if their sense of form and their love of mental discipline had forsaken them. With the Jesuits the question took a different turn. That great fighting body, in discovering the hitherto almost neglected possibilities of the school-drama, decided, with a characteristic mixture of traditionalism and originality, not to discard the ancient rules, but to rejuvenate them. They may be said to be the first who understood these rules and, deftly modifying them, to have created a modern dramaturgy in Germany. The Jesuit Avancinus calls the sacred unities a "superstition" and shows scant respect to mere lawgivers who do not test their own precepts: he is a practical man ("Ego practicos eos imitor, quos suspicio: non propterea deteriores: quod minus vetustos. Saeculi hoc vitium est, non artis, quod tam sero tam illustres viros protulerit").[3] For this was the secret of the rejuvenating process: When men use certain means for ends that are very dear to them, those means, even if they are poor, are thoroughly vitalized. The Jesuits wanted popularity and success for the glory and extension of the Catholic church. As a body they were exceedingly shrewd; consequently only those who could achieve results with the audience were given their boards, and in order to get results these gave the public what it wanted. The editor of the *Ludi theatrales* of Jacob Bidermannus owns it quite frankly: the author has offended Flaccus occasionally? Be it so. He knew the rules well enough, though, but: "rather believe me, reader, I have done it in sane deliberation, for my object has been solely to suit the inclinations of my audience."[4]

After all, why be pestered with rules, even if practical necessity did not brush them aside? They are not an eternal and unchangeable

[1] Cf. Spingarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 162 ff.

[2] Cf. Borinski, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[3] *Poesis dramatica* (Colon., 1675), I.

[4] Whatever he may have written, Bidermannus had his reasons. He tried like Terence: "quoquo modo effecisse, Populo ut placerent, quas dedisset fabulas" (*Ludi theatrales* [Monachi, 1666]).

institution.[1] Few would disagree on this with the Jesuits when we reflect that even Scaliger had said so in connection with some rule of the chorus, and he a rule-monger himself: "If now somebody should do in a different manner, I think he would be allowed to, just as our predecessors claimed that it was allowed to them" ("Si quis aliter nunc fecerit, puto ei licere posse, quemadmodum sibi licuisse voluerunt ille").[2] And Scaliger, at that time, certainly enjoyed the respect of the literary world of Germany. Opitz wrote verses for him[3] and found it difficult to believe that Scaliger was a mere man."[4] Klaj shared his feeling in this regard: if Scaliger was not more than a man, at least he was all that a man could possibly be (". . . . also dasz es gar scheinet/als wann die Natur an diesem Manne versuchen wolle/wie weit sich des Menschen Kraeffte in der Geschikklichkeit erstrekketen").[5] With independent minds like Schupp, the matter of the rules again bears a different aspect. Such men are constitutionally adverse to rules: they are too strong. And, strange to remark, it hardly occurs to anybody to question their behavior. Thrown round the radiance of Shakespeare or the majesty of Goethe, the mantle of the rules would appear shabby, as it would seem skimpy on the broad shoulders of a Luther or a Rabelais.

Schupp simply could not understand the use of rules.

Ob das Woertlein und, die, das, ihr, und dergleichen kurz oder lang sei, daran ist mir und allen Musquetirern in Stade und Bremen nichts gelegen. Welcher Roem. Kaiser, ja welcher Apostel hat ein Gesetz geben, dasz man einer silben halben, dem Opitio zu gefallen, einen guten Gedanken solle fahren lassen? Ihr vornehme critici, sagt mir, ob der koenig David in seinen Psalmen sich allzeit gebunden habe an die Reguln, welche Pindarus in seinen Odis observirt hat? Und ihr, Teutsche Poetae, sagt mir ob Lutherus, wann er traurig oder freudig gewesen und sein Gemuet zu erquicken ein geistreiches Liedlein gemacht, darin er mehr auf das Anliegen seines Herzens und auf die Realia, als auf poetische, isabellische, florabellische,

[1] The first German Humanists had already said so, but they may have been prejudiced by their hard struggle against Scholasticism and by their very strong conviction that they had opened a new Christian period in the drama as well as in life.

[2] *Poetices* (1561), L, III, cap. 97, 2d ed. (1581), p. 377.

[3] Which wound up with these words: . . . . "Dann wann ich was dein werth dir übersenden wolte/So könt ich nichts verehrn/als dich nur dir allein" (*ap.* Moller, *Tyrocinium* [1656], p. 81).

[4] Ein Mann, ein blosser Mann/Der Adler in der Luft/redt alle Völker an (*ap.* Peschwitz, *Parnassus*, vo. Scaliger).

[5] *Lobrede von der Theutschen Poeterey* (1645), p. 8. The reasons of Scaliger's popularity in Germany are well explained by Borinski, *Poetik der Renaissance* (1888), pp. 10 ff.

corydonische, galateische phrases gesehen hat, allzeit in acht genommen hab' eure Antipericatametaparbeugedamphirribificationes poeticas sive in Parnasso sive in Helicone ex utero parturientis Minervae, non sine risu prudentiorum Satiricorum productas.[1]

That this protest was effective would appear from the pamphlets of Sacer and Caldenbach, both directed against the stringency of the Opitzian rules.[2]

In certain academic circles, in Marburg, e.g., this independence was curiously misinterpreted. Schupp's friend Conrad Bachmann once thought: "Was sich reyme das reyme sich." But when Schupp became acquainted with "Opitzian/Buchners/Harsdoerfers/Caesii/ und anderer vornehmen Teutschen poeten Schrifften und Anleitung zur Poeterey" and gave him these to read, the aged Hessian laughingly said: "Wer von Natur inventioes ist/*copiam verborum* hat/ und in bonis authoribus belesen ist/und will sich auf den Notfall nicht *resolviren*, dasz er wolle innerhalb 14. Tagen ein Teutscher Poet werden/der ist nicht werth dasz er Brot esse. . . . ."[3] The fact is that Bachmann, and many with him, had no idea of poetry. They seem to have perceived only the externals, and quite imperfectly at that. The appearance of poetics in the vernacular, while possibly heightening their discrimination in what they took for poetry, certainly also cheapened it in their eyes, by making it appear so easy of attainment. As a result Schupp's whole-souled declaration was to them only an encouragement to treat the rules offhand. Where Schupp implied the necessity of genuine poetical endowments, they only saw the advisability of being von "Naturinventioes." Yet even that was an advance and a sign of impending change.

In 1675 an anonymous author of clownish expression but wide information and shrewd sense, and who must have known of the

[1] *Morgen- und Abendlieder, Schriften* (Hamburg, 1701), I, 896, *ap.* Goedeke, *Grundriss*, 2d ed., III, 235. Written before 1661, when Schupp died. Also quoted by Neumeister, *De poetis hujus saeculi praecipuis* (1695), vo. Schuppius.

[2] Christoph Caldenbach's protest appeared anonymously as *Der pedantische Irrthum des Uberwitzigen doch betrogenen Schulfuchses* (Rappersweil, 1673). Schupp's gibe furnished G. F. Sacer, i.e., Hartmann Reinhold, with his second title: *Reime dich oder ich fresse dich* (Nordhausen, 1673), the first title of which may have been borrowed by Abraham a Sancta Clara, in spirit a twin brother of Schupp, for a collection of sermons: *Reimb dich oder ich liss dich* (Salzburg, 1684). Neumeister also mentions the second title under Plavius, alias Plauen, M. Joh.

[3] An den Leser. Sonderlich an die junge Teutsche Poeten (*Morgen- und Abendlieder. Schrifften*, [1663], p. 935). Goedeke wrongly represents this as an utterance of Schupp himself.

French *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, surveying the situation, found that the Germans spurned neither the ancients nor the moderns and were treading the middle way, removed alike from the rude ignorance of the "English comedians" and effete slavery to the rules.[1] His verdict was correct. Among Harsdörfer and his friends and even among such sedate philologists as Schottelius,[2] the idea was rife that their age had other needs than the ancient times, an idea which they may have received from the fiery Humanists, quoted above, and which they themselves passed on to the frisky protagonists of the "Galante Zeit."

Its application, however, was modified. The needs were seen no longer to be social, ethical, but individualistic, sentimental. With the increasing importance attached to natural gifts, the power of the rules steadily decreased. It is one of the strains of the "Galante Zeit" to appreciate the finer inborn qualities while debasing them into mere adornments of a life alike futile and materialistic. The doctrine of the infallibility of nature, never theoretically denied, but in practice ever scornfully neglected, was coming into its own, borne upon the wave of Rousseau's popularity.

Thus Christian Weise has no use for rules: "Wer ein *Ingenium* dazu hat/der wird sich selber finden: und wer keine *Naturalia* dazu hat/der wird sich aus meinen Regeln schlecht erbauen."[3] But judgment, of course, should always guide one: "Das ist der beste Künstler, der sich den nothwendigen Umstanden nach an keine Regel bindet und gleichwohl die besorglichen Absurditäten zu vermeiden und zu verbergen weisz."[4] Weise was a man of the world, a *Weltmann*, and he had noticed that the classics were not the main

[1] *Alamodisch technologisches Interim* (Rappersweil, 1675).

[2] Harsdörfer quoted the views of the Italian Bisaccione—Maiolino Bisaccioni of Ferrara, best known as a writer of historical novels, 1582–1663—who held that as to operatic pieces in general "Aristoteles ist nicht mehr der Poeterey Gesetzgeber/und Euripides/Aristophanes/Sophocles/solten so wohl von uns zu lernen haben als Plautus und Terentius" (*Gesprächspiele* [Nürnberg, 1641–49], IV, 44). Schottelius, expressing a desire to see a German write a treatise on poetics like that of Scaliger, had his doubts as to the extent to which the ancient rules should be taken into consideration, as ". . . . wir doch in einem anderen/sonderlich in Freuden- und Trauer-spielen/nicht eben nach der Griechen und Lateiner Gesetzen/sondern vielmehr nach unseren und itzigen Arten und Weisen solch Spiele zu verfertigen/uns einzurichten haben moechten . . . ." (*Teutsche Vers- oder Reim-Kunst* [1645], ed. 1656, p. 266).

[3] *Lust und Nutz der spielenden Jugend* (1690). Just the thing to say for the author of the *Zweyfache Poetenzunft* and the arch-enemy of Zesen. Cf. *Die drey aergsten Ertznarren*, cap. 11; *Ueberfluessige Gedanken*, X, 12.

[4] *Comoedienprobe* (1695).

thing to get on in the world (". . . . niemand wird bey den wichtigesten Staats-Handlungen auch wohl in gemeinen Angelegenheiten sehr *avanciren*, wenn er seinen Vortrag nach der *Ciceronianis*chen oder nach der *Aristotelis*chen Leisten einrichten wolte").[1] Natural gifts, if properly trained by practical usage, were sure to lead one much farther.[2] It is no far cry from Weise, *galant*, and full of *Affecte*, to the teeming libretto-writer of the period, Barthold Feind. With a pen dipped in hysop as often as not, he wrote many pages on the technique of the opera. But even he declared finally: "*Methodus* ist und bleibt allemahl *arbitraria*." Besides, he believed that his field was different: "In den Opern . . . . läst man sich nicht gerne so enge Gesetze vorschreiben,"[3] a view which Harsdörfer had already expressed and of which the authors of school-dramas also claimed the benefit. In the latter case, as a result of the many material difficulties for the regular and frequent supply of dramas, distribution of parts, rehearsals and productions, relaxation in theory naturally followed upon relaxation in practice. Feind's colleague Menantes agreed with him, putting the opinion of the pre-Gottschedian period "in a nutshell" when he wrote ". . . . weil alle theatralische Sachen in der *Opinion* beruhen, darf man eben in einem und anderm Dinge kein Distelkopf sein, sondern musz dem Theatro, der Materie, der Zeit und andere *Circumstantien* eine Freiheit lassen."[4] The revolt had clearly spread beyond control.

In 1704 Omeis, *Professor Poeseos* in Altdorf, makes it very plain that a great change had come to pass. Rules there were to be, but it was understood that their basis should be the *German drama!* He knew Aristotle but did not consider him as a lawgiver, neither did he protest against the usage of his own time as he found it.[5] There is a crowning fact expressed by this calm aposteriorism and this absolute acceptance of the legitimate growth, or at least change, of literary forms. Even among the most ardent devotees of the classical, the excellence of nature had become a tenet. Classical

[1] *Neue Proben von der vertrauten Redenskunst* (1700).

[2] As Avancinus had observed before: ". . . . manche aus einem blossen guten Exempel zu guter Imitation gebracht werden, da ein ander aus allen Regeln nicht eine gute Zeile wird zuwege bringen."—Weise, *ibid.*

[3] *Gedanken von der Opera* (1708), p. 86.

[4] *Die allerneueste Art zur reinen und galanten Poesie zu gelangen* (1722), p. 412.

[5] *Gruendliche Anleitung* (Nürnberg, 1704).

texts were quoted to order: Cato and Cicero, nay Tertullian, were called upon to testify.[1] The era of absolutism was past indeed.

In the meantime, of course, Aristotle had fallen from on high. In the main his career had been triumphant everywhere, in spite of both the quiet subversiveness of certain commentators and the sensational attacks of the Patrizzi-Bruno type.[2] In 1717, however, in Germany, he was merely an object of scorn: "However great Aristotle may have been in his time, at present many have reached such a degree of impudence, that they cannot speak of him with enough contempt" ("Quantus uir autem Aristoteles etiam suo tempore fuerit, tamen eo impudentiae multi dilabuntur hodie, ut non satis contemptim de eo loqui sciunt"[3]).

A not unimportant conclusion may be drawn from this. On close examination, the *Critische Dichtkunst*, although ostensibly a monument to traditionalism, is partly an expression of the rival claims. To the scholar who re-reads it with the foregoing outline in mind, this may become more striking. In spite of Gottsched's autocratic instincts of which one is conscious all through the book, silent admissions, unobtrusive restrictions, a toning down of the once sweeping assertions and a general atmosphere of reasonableness distinctly confirm this impression.

When we further remember that Gottsched's period of influence was to be followed, after 1740, by the almost passionate reaction of the Swiss Reformers, of Gellert, of Lessing, we can discern more clearly under the appearances the essential weakness of a system undermined by more than two centuries of destructive criticism. Pseudo-classicism was tottering on its bases and Gottsched's massive work, once down, was to give longer and more effective service as a tombstone than as a temple. To be sure, under the circumstances the Sturm und Drang period loses something of its romantic abruptness. Yet a heightened consciousness of historical sequence may compensate for the loss.

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[1] Cf. Car. Colczawa, *Exercitationes Dramaticae* (Pragae, 1703), I, "Ad Lectorem."

[2] Cf. Spingarn, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

[3] Boltz, *De causis jacturae rei literariae* (1717), p. 91.